

File Created by [Blogging Rebirth](#) WP Plugin

# **Critics of Triple Bottom Line Companies Say People and Planet Results Hard to Measure - But Are ...**

Be a **workplace hero** ...  
ReTweet this post on **twitter**



In this new article in *The Economist*, the chief executive of the Centre for Development and Enterprise argues that results in the People and Planet areas of a triple bottom line focus (Profits, People, Planet) are hard to measure. Therefore, while Ann Bernstein frames her case in an African continental context, she suggests that business leaders everywhere would be best served by just pursuing the classic bottom line of Profits.

But just because a goal is difficult to measure, does that mean it should be abandoned? On the one hand there is something to be said for the Measurable attribute of SMART goals. On the other, though, many of Winning Workplaces' award-winning small firms have succeeded financially *because* they built People and Planet bottom lines into their business model, and created human capital strategies that align with their triple bottom line focus.

The table below shows not only Profit-oriented results for five of our Top Small Workplace award winners, but People and Planet outcomes as well. In fact, the latter two bottom lines have helped these five organizations collectively bring in more than half a billion dollars in annual sales!

Company	Year of Award	Profit (*sales/yr)	People	Planet
King Arthur Flour Company	2008	\$61 M	100% employee owned, small teams can impact organization-wide programs and policies, transparency a core value	Certified B Corporation, Company donates 40 hours/year of paid volunteer time to non-profit of employees' choosing
New Belgium Brewing	2008	\$96 M	Open book management, brand-famous red bicycles given to tenured employees in connection with themed wellness programs	Headquarters a tourist destination for viewing green technologies, frequent participation in conservation and community efforts
The Redwoods Group	2008	\$16 M	Built into mission to ensure safety of client orgs (YMCA's and Jewish Community Organizations) even if a given program is not a Redwoods client	Certified B Corporation, significant portion of pre-tax profits given to nonprofit organizations throughout the world
Daphne Utilities	2010	\$14 M	Pay for performance system, all suggestion box ideas tried or discussed, lower-level workers paired with management in customer-facing events	Used Cooking Oil Program results in fewer sewer spills and line blockages, company trucks and heavy equipment run on biofuels
Patagonia	2010	\$314 M	Job shadowing, open book management, organic cafeteria foods priced lower than local restaurant offerings	Company exclusively uses organic cotton, environmental section on website empowers customers to take action

*\*As of the year of their award*

**My counterargument** to Bernstein is that if a company is truly committed to all three bottom lines, it will find a way to measure with some degree of depth and certainty the People and Planet results, which both influence and are influenced by Profits.

**Related:** The CEO of one of the companies listed above, King Arthur Flour, will speak on employee leadership development at our conference that starts tomorrow in Denver. Last chance to register!

View full post on [Winning Workplaces](#)

You can also find this article published on [Critics of Triple Bottom Line Companies Say People and Planet Results Hard to Measure - But Are ...](#), and on the tag pages [Bottom](#), [Companies](#), [Critics](#), [Hard](#), [Line](#), [Measure](#), [People](#), [Planet](#), [Results](#), [Triple](#).